1980-23

MR. LINCOLN'S NEIGHBORHOOD

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

The Springfield of 1860 was a thriving community of 9,400 people. Its citizens were usually well-acquainted with their neighbors and the members of the Lincoln family were no exception. The Lincolns were close friends with a number of the people of their neighborhood. The relationships of the Lincolns with three of these people are discussed below. The map of the neighborhood in the center of this brochure will help you to identify the locations of their houses.

JULIA SPRIGG purchased her home in the Lincoln neighborhood in February 1853, about six months after her husband's death. She became close friends with Mrs. Lincoln. Mrs. Sprigg had dark eyes and black hair and her friends considered her appearance to be attractive.

Tad Lincoln, Abraham's youngest son, was a frequent visitor at the Sprigg home and would sometimes play at hiding from his father when it was time for him to go home. Mrs. Sprigg's daughter, Julia, often acted as a babysitter for Tad and his brother, Willie.

On several occasions she packed "a white muslin gown to spend the night with Mrs. Lincoln when Lincoln was out of town." Julia enjoyed doing this because she had a good time when she was with Mrs. Lincoln. According to Julia, Mrs. Lincoln "was the kind of woman that children liked, and children would be attracted to her."

After Mrs. Lincoln became First Lady, she continued to be friends with Mrs. Sprigg and exchanged letters with her.

The Sarah Cook House and a house that once stood immediately to the south of it were built and originally owned by JOHN E. ROLL, a lifelong friend of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln, twenty-two years old, was a resident of New Salem when he first met Roll in 1831. Lincoln was supervising the construction of a flatboat and hired Roll to assist. They became good friends during the month it took to build the craft.

Later in that same year, Roll moved to Springfield. Here he learned the trade of a mason and plasterer and entered the construction business on his own. He built more than one hundred houses, including these two in the immediate Lincoln neighborhood.

During the years that he lived in Springfield, Roll continued his close friendship with Abraham Lincoln. When Mr. Lincoln left Springfield on February 11, 1861, to be inaugurated as President, he entrusted the care of the family dog, Fido, to the Roll family. In 1863, Mr. Lincoln's Springfield barber mentioned Fido in a letter to the President: "Tell Taddy that his (and Willie's) dog is alive and kicking doing well and he stays mostly at John E. Rolls with his boys who are about the size now that Tad and Willie were when they left for Washington."

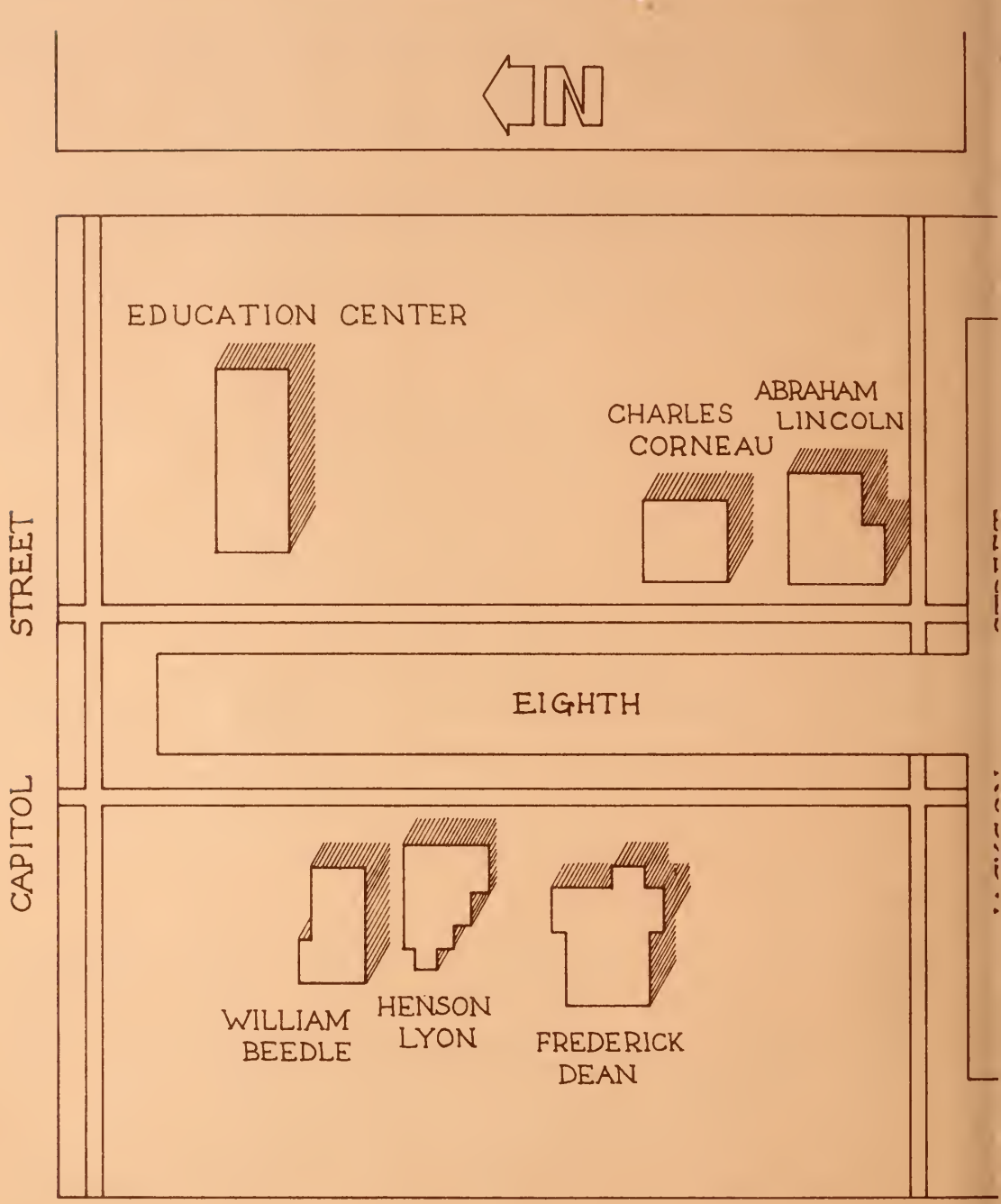
In the 1830's JESSE K. DUBOIS and Lincoln were both serving in the Illinois state legislature as members of the same political party. The close friendship which developed between them lasted a lifetime.

In May 1856, the Illinois Republican Convention nominated its candidates for state offices. Abraham Lincoln championed the inclusion of Dubois on the ticket, because they were both from the southern part of the state. Lincoln had told the delegates "not to worry--that a friend of his, a red-headed Frenchman from Lawrence County was on the way, and he would take care of Southern Illinois." Partly as a result of Lincoln's support, Dubois was nominated for State Auditor. After being elected to the office, he moved from Lawrence County to Springfield, where Lincoln helped him to find a home.

In Springfield, Dubois continued to be a close friend and political associate of Lincoln's. Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Dubois were also friends. Dubois supported Lincoln's nomination for President at the Chicago Convention of the Republican party in 1860. Prior to the convention, Lincoln gave Dubois a letter of introduction: "This will introduce our Auditor of State Jesse K. Dubois--you may safely confide in him, and in all others in whom he will advise you to confide."

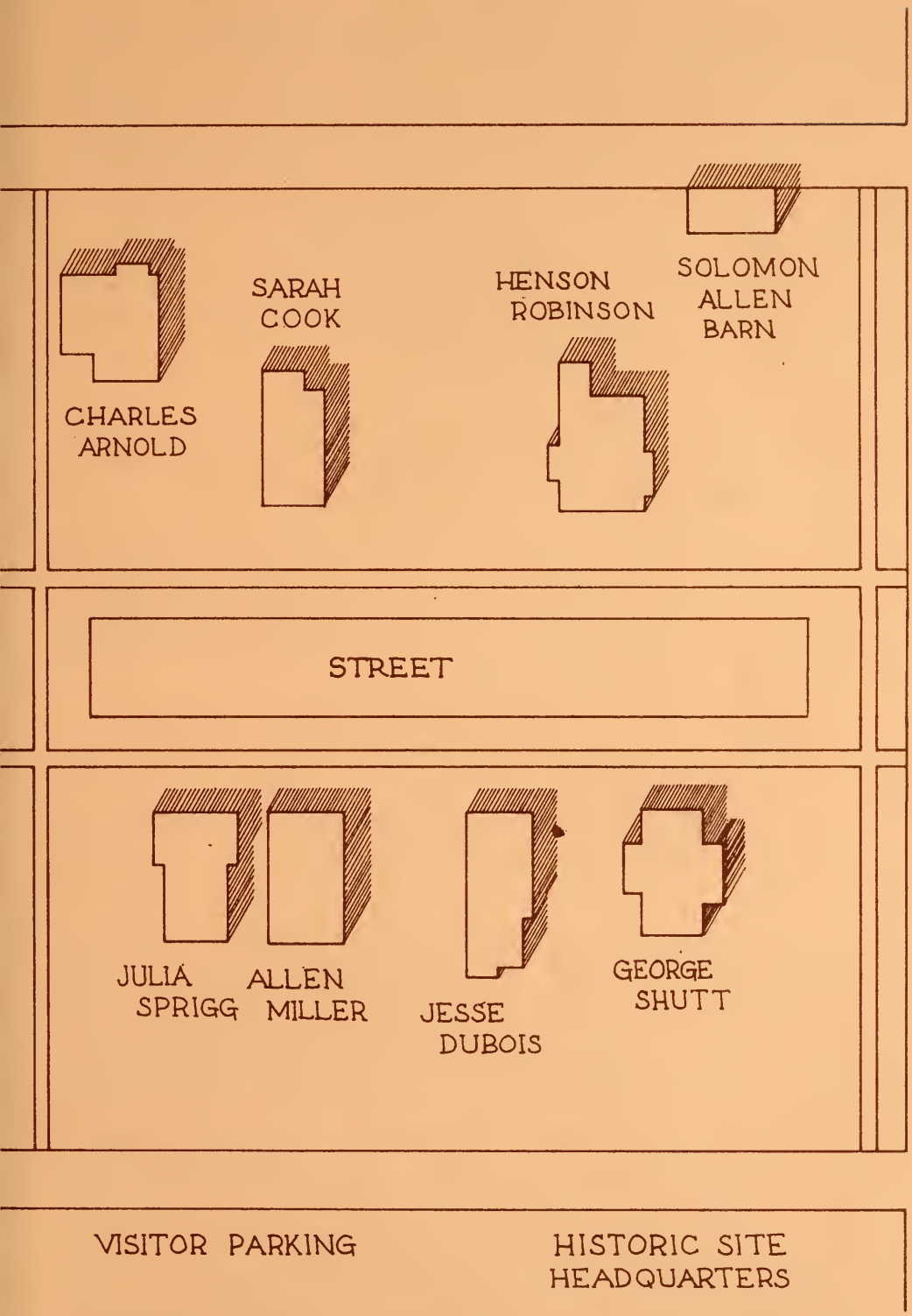
Dubois visited President Lincoln several times in Washington. He also had the sad duty of going to Washington to represent the city of Springfield at Lincoln's funeral ceremonies and of accompanying Lincoln's body back to its final resting place in Springfield.

These historic buildings, homes of Lincoln's neighl
as part of the Lincoln Home National Historic Sit
based on research into their structural history.



These houses are identified by the names of their oc
President. In front of each house, you will find ar
about the historic occupants.

s, are being preserved by the National Park Service
They are being restored to their historic appearance



ants in 1860, the year Abraham Lincoln was elected
terpretive sign that provides additional information

THE DIVERSITY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

The Lincoln neighborhood was composed of an impressive variety of people coming from many different walks of life. Many of the houses that these people resided in no longer exist, but their locations will be described by referring to the positions of the surviving houses which are shown on the map in the center portion of this brochure.

Though the Lincoln neighborhood was part of a city environment, there was a farmer living here. HENSON LYON, who lived in a surviving house to the northwest of the Lincoln Home, owned a farm two-and-a-half miles east of Springfield.

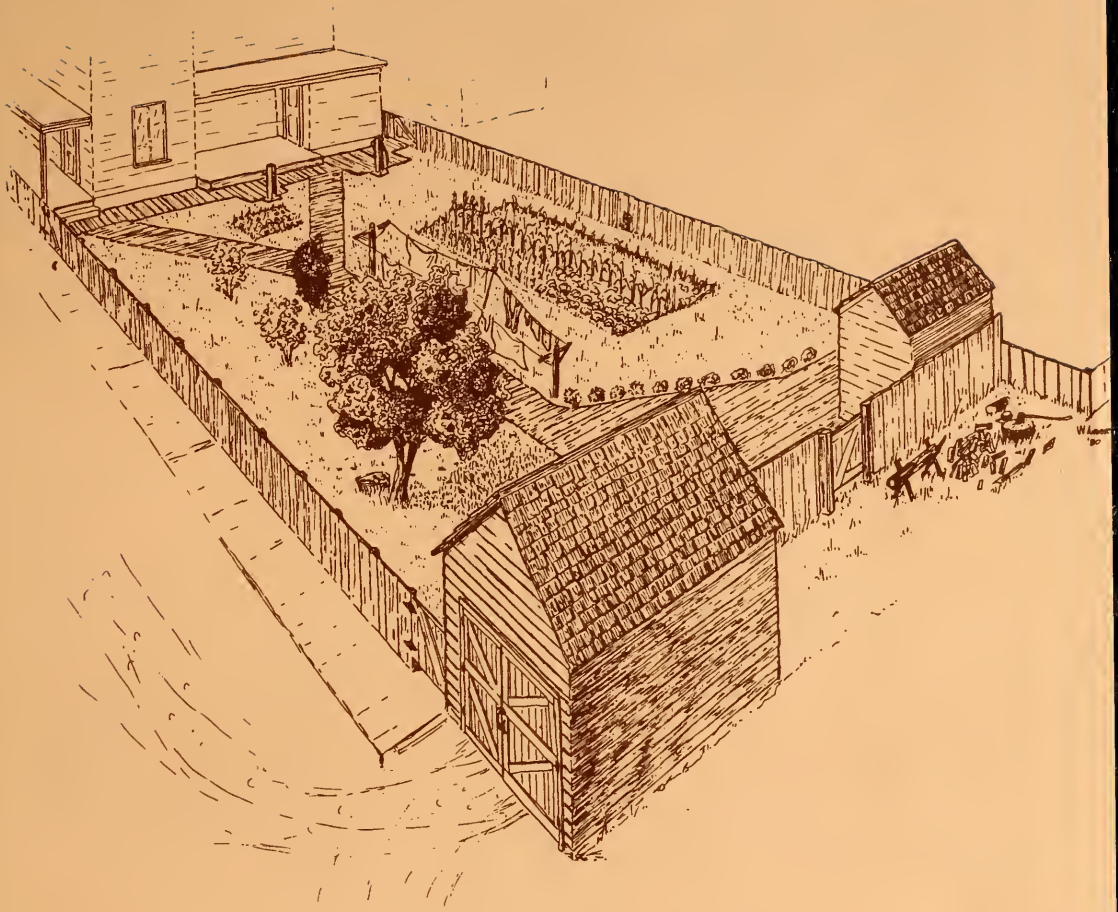
MARY REMANN was a widow who ran a boarding house to help meet expenses. Her boarding house and residence was located just north of the National Park Service Education Center.

JESSE KENT made a living by constructing and repairing carriages. This was an essential occupation in an era when people were dependent on horse-drawn transportation. Kent lived on the property that is now the site of the Education Center.

AMOS WORTHEN was the Illinois State Geologist. During the time that he lived in the Lincoln neighborhood, he was carrying out a survey of the mineral resources and geological features of a portion of the state. His residence was located immediately south of the Education Center.

JARED P. IRWIN was a bricklayer who assisted with the construction of what is today called the Old State Capitol. In 1860, he was elected vice president of the Springfield Lincoln Club, which organized support for Lincoln's candidacy for President. His residence was located on the lot between the Arnold House and Sarah Cook House.

The lot immediately to the north of the Henson Robinson residence was the site of a house that was owned and resided in by the Jameson Jenkins family. They were a black family. Jenkin's occupation was moving goods in a wagon. It was Jameson Jenkins who drove the carriage carrying Abraham Lincoln to the train depot on the day of Lincoln's departure from Springfield on his way to his inauguration as President.



Backyards were a necessary and important part of the Lincoln neighborhood. The above illustration shows what a typical backyard contained. Because of the absence of indoor plumbing, an outdoor privy was a necessity. Likewise, two pumps were commonly present, one to provide well water and the other rain water that was collected and stored in an underground cistern. Fruit trees provided a dietary supplement in season, as did vegetable and herb gardens.

Since people depended on horse-drawn transportation, most backyards contained a barn to provide shelter for a horse and possibly a cow or other livestock. A carriage house was often present to allow for the storage of such conveyances as a buggy, carriage, or sleigh. All of these features of a backyard were connected with the practical necessities of life in the 1840's and 50's.

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SAFETY IN AN UNFAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT

In order to insure that your visit is a safe one, remember that you are entering a nineteenth-century environment that is being preserved and restored as near to its original condition as possible. Uneven and slippery board walks and steep, narrow staircases are uncommon today, but a century ago, they were a part of the every day scene.

MR. LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD

The Springfield of the 1840's and '50's was an expanding and prosperous community. This description was written by a first-hand observer in 1842:

"Notwithstanding the depreciation of the currency, and the pressure of the times, Springfield continues to improve. About one hundred buildings went up last year, and among them some beautiful and costly residences, and extensive business houses. The stores...will compare with any in the Western country.... The Southwest quarter of the city has been nearly covered over with houses within the last year.... The extensive building during the pressure of '40 and '41... indicates the amount of capital Springfield will employ, and the extent of trade it will ultimately command. Situated in the Sangamon Valley--the seat of Government for a State which contains more fertile land than any other in the Union, can it be doubted...that Springfield will be one of the largest inland towns un the United States?"

In that year of 1842, Abraham Lincoln, a thirty-three year-old lawyer, married Mary Todd. Within the next year, their first child, Robert, was born, and the year after that, 1844, they purchased the Lincoln Home.

RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

These historic buildings are today being used as private residences, just as they were in Lincoln's time. During your visit in the Lincoln neighborhood, it is urged that you respect the occupants' rights to privacy, just as you expect other people to do while they are visiting your neighborhood.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE